15: Thomson G-3 (1886-1900) 1902

OU9 Tonga OU9

THE OTUHAKA

The two drummers sit in the middle of the semicircle

*From a photograph by* *J. Martin, Auckland*

To face page 222

142
291
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[facing p.222]

532 evidence of idolatry and heathenism. Whereas wood
177 carving had been done previously with adzes or tools made of shell or tooth, local artisans became attracted to the more highly perfected metal instruments of the foreigners. Strongly influenced by materialism and other characteristics of western civilization, the Tongans abandoned the majority of their former artistic activities, and consequently, the
[462 entire realm of Tongan art has suffered. For the
287 most part, only the arts of women (e.g. tapa making,
285] basket and mat weaving) have survived up to the present day in Tonga.[7]

341 Tongan architecture has obviously been
342 influenced by contact with the west; rafter lashing
177 with hand-braided sennit is rarely to be seen any
283 more, and it is not uncommon to find Tongan
284 houses today with corrugated iron roofs.
411 Hand-carved war clubs and other weapons, as well as
501 the skillfully-designed double canoes, have been
177

[p.16-A]

55: Anderson D,T-5 (1777) 1967 OU9 Tonga OU9



sufferd to shoot into a trunk, and the coarser sort which they sleep upon from a plant call'd E'varra.[1] There are many other articles of less note that employ their spare time, as combs of which they make vast numbers, little baskets made of the same substance as the matts and others of the fibrous Cocoa nut husk, either plain or interwoven with small beads, but all made with such neatness and taste in the disposition of the different varietys, which are very numerous, that a stranger cannot help looking with pleasure at their assiduity and dexterity. Every person knows the beautifull character that Solomon has drawn of an industrious women and the happy consequences that attend it, and we may almost venture to say that Solomon in that character has included a true picture of all the women of Tonga. The province alloted to the men is as might be expected far more laborious and extensive than that of the women. Agriculture, Architecture, Boat building, Fishing and other things that relate to Navigation are the objects of their care. I would not wish to refer to any thing prior to the date of this voyage to illustrate any circumstance by, when I can avoid it, as it would be interweaving subjects that ought to be seperate unless every person knew them as well as myself, but I cannot help relating here an observation which may have been made before, though not to my knowledge, which is that in all the places I have visited in these seas the degree of civilization that has taken place amongst them may be known by the attention they pay to the fair sex. Those in a very barbarous state treat their women with such a degree of rudeness or rather brutality and at the same time indifference that they seem to think them not so much intended as a companion, or to be upon the same scale with themselves, as a set of beings every way inferior to them and only fit for such mean offices as they would not stoop to. On the contrary as civilization has advanc'd we find them not only eas'd of those laborious employments which their natural delicacy of frame requires, but treated with that respect to which they are often more justly entitled than their lordly masters, and have even a great sway in the management of affairs. Cultivated roots and fruits being their principal support requires their constant attention to Agriculture, which they pursue very diligently and seem to have brought to as much perfection almost as circumstances will admitt of. The land about Mooa though so well planted is scarcely equal to that part of the island where Capt Cook anchor'd in 1773, and from Mooa to the NZ point which is all the places we have seen it is tolerable, from whence one might suppose, if the unseen parts are in the same proportion, that two thirds

[1] *fala* was the word for sleeping-mat, not for a plant. The pandanus was called *fa*.

/255 cont./

in this Archipelago was reached; the discrepancy occasional observed between belief and action is doubtless a universal attribute of human nature.

/256/ The change in Tongan religion is thus merely an exchange of the old belief in supernatural powers for a new belief in divine omnipotence. At the same time we must not forget that Christianization strengthened and deepened the religiousness of this people.

5. THEIR ART AND THEIR PLAY

A. Music, Poetry and Dance

The visual arts were not very highly developed in ancient Tonga. Noteworthy are only the step pyramids (langi) (682)

682. See also W.C. McKern, Archaeology of Tonga /cited in English/. p. 33 ff.

built up out of coral limestone plates, in which the supreme rulers, the Tu'i Tonga (and their high-ranking relatives) were once interred, as well as the large trilithon "Ha'amonga 'a Maui," a gate-shaped stone structure (probably around 1200 A.D.) at Kolonga/Tongatapu. Aside from that, only the few wooden sculptures of gods are to be mentioned.

In present-day Tonga there are no visual arts, since such works of architecture and sculpture have not been created for a long time because of political and religious changes in the Archipelago, and the modern period has apparently given no impetus to such efforts.

The musical and poetic arts, on the other hand, were carried on in the pre-European era to a great extent. Ancient Tongan music and explorers and the great seafarers who came after them. Europeanization, especially the Wesleyan Christianization of these islands, however, brought a change and also a suppression of these arts which therefore appear today in an essentially altered form.

Song was quite popular in ancient Tonga. The natives sang